



## State of Connecticut

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Good morning Chairmen Coleman and Fox, Ranking Members Hetherington and Kissel, and Members of the Judiciary Committee. I am testifying today in support of Raised Bill Number 6427: An Act Concerning Post-Conviction Procedures in Death Penalty Cases. I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for raising this important bill.

We can all agree that the current death penalty system has problems. It can take years, even decades, before a person sentenced to death may actually be put to death. Some may argue that because of these flaws, we should abolish the death penalty. It is my belief that we can maintain the death penalty in Connecticut if we make an effort to create a workable system.

This bill is an attempt to fix the current system. We have seen similar proposals in the past, and we are certainly open to suggestions as to how to best correct the system. This proposal places time limitations on both the state and the defendant on the filing of appeals and habeas corpus applications in death penalty cases. The bill also requires the court to order, without a hearing, DNA test requests by persons on death row. Of course, it is our intention to maintain all constitutional protections afforded to persons convicted of capital felonies and sentenced to death.

The death penalty serves as a powerful deterrent to prevent the most heinous of crimes. The death penalty can only be a deterrent when we, as lawmakers, can ensure the fair and effective application of the death penalty. To permit the appeals process to go on for decades is not only a burden on the state, but it also a disservice and injustice to the families of victims.

I urge the Judiciary Committee to pass Raised Bill 6427. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation, and I look forward to the opportunity to debate this bill with the full General Assembly.

Thank you.